

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Northwest Maricopa Region



2015 IMPACT REPORT

SCHOOL SUCCESS BEGINS AT BIRTH



90% OF A CHILD'S CRITICAL BRAIN DEVELOPMENT HAPPENS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN,

so early experiences lay the foundation for success in school and in life. Arizonans created First Things First (FTF) to give more children the tools they need to arrive at school prepared to meet our state's high expectations. FTF provides resources and professional expertise then combines it with local decision-making to build on the work of community organizations impacting children and families. Local volunteers – parents, educators, business professionals, philanthropists, faith leaders and tribal representatives – decide how the funds will be used to best improve school readiness for children in their area.

EARLY CHILDHOOD IS ONE OF THE BEST INVESTMENTS A STATE CAN MAKE

Research by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman showed that every \$1 invested in early childhood can yield returns between \$4 and \$16. Early literacy and its impact on school success is one of the best examples of the return on investment in early childhood. High quality early learning experiences, rich in language and literacy, reduce early learning gaps and ensure that children are ready to start reading when they enter kindergarten.



Gaps in children's vocabulary start to appear as early as
18 MONTHS.



By the time children are
3 & 4 YEARS OLD,
their vocabulary, attention and
general knowledge are predictors of
THIRD & FOURTH GRADE
reading comprehension.



THIRD GRADE
reading ability is one of the
best predictors of
HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION.



As an early childhood system partner, First Things First invests in proven programs and innovative strategies that: strengthen families in their role as their child's first teacher; improve the quality of early learning environments like preschool and child care, and expand access to those programs; and, promote prevention and early identification of health problems that could impact learning later on. By getting more Arizona kids ready for school, FTF helps put children on a path to academic success that benefits them, our communities and our state.

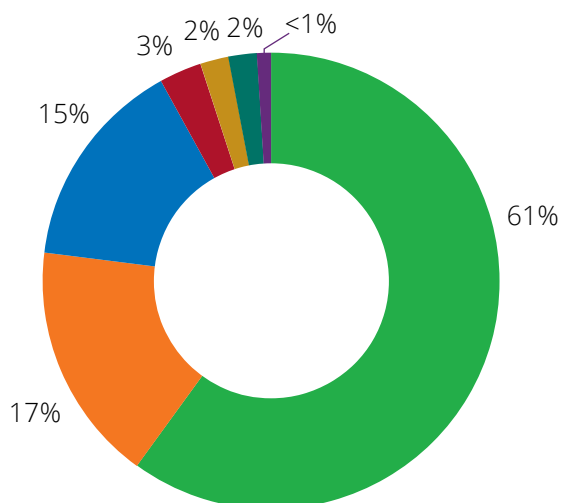
\$1



INVESTED IN EARLY
CHILDHOOD YIELDS UP TO A
\$16 RETURN

FISCAL YEAR 2015 IMPACT

NORTHWEST MARICOPA FY2015 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



- Quality Preschool and Child Care \$6,676,965.56**
 Children exposed to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate.
- Preventive Health \$1,922,738.74**
 Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on.
- Strengthening Families and Early Literacy \$1,634,833.66**
 Families are a child's first and best teachers.
- Parent and Community Awareness \$287,198.62**
 We all have a shared responsibility to help children arrive at school prepared to succeed.
- Workforce Development and Training \$205,546.93**
 A child's relationships with early caregivers impact whether her brain will develop in ways that promote learning.
- Research and Accountability \$181,373.32**
 Measuring effectiveness and promoting continuous quality improvement rely on robust, accurate data.
- System Coordination \$21,652.77**
 Collaboration among system partners maximizes resources and effectiveness.

Total = \$10,930,309.60

- 6,313** Children had access to a higher standard of early learning through preschool and child care programs participating in Quality First.
- 1,807** Infants, toddlers and preschoolers received scholarships to access high quality early learning through preschool or child care.
- 19,008** Families accessed early childhood information, education or referrals through family resource centers.
- 9,086** Families of newborns left the hospital with tools to help them support their child's health and learning.
- 213** Families received voluntary in-home visits from trained providers to enhance their parenting skills and deal with specific challenges, including first-time parenting, parenting a child with special needs, or dealing with multiple births.
- 443** Parents and other caregivers completed a voluntary series of community-based classes on topics like parenting skills, brain development, early literacy and nutrition.
- 5,366** Fluoride varnishes applied to protect against dental decay.
- 881** Screenings completed to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues in young kids and prevent learning challenges later on.

INVESTING IN SCHOOL READINESS



PEORIA BOY BENEFITS FROM HIGH QUALITY CARE IN HIS EARLY YEARS

When Victoria Roybal needed to find child care for her toddler, she wanted most to find a caregiver she could trust. This was even more critical for her son Angelo because as an infant, he was diagnosed with dysphagia, a condition which causes swallowing difficulties and other development delays.

Roybal found a partner in his care through Charter Oak Academy in Peoria which participates in Quality First, a signature program of First Things First, which partners with child care and preschool providers to improve the quality of early learning across Arizona. Quality First funds quality improvements that research proves help children thrive, such as training for teachers to expand their skills and to help create learning environments that nurture the emotional, social and academic development of every child. The in-home child care center is a Highest Quality rated center.

Center Director Valerie Forney took time to accommodate Angelo's health care needs, Roybal said. "I felt like she went the extra mile to make sure he was safe. I could drop him off with peace of mind, and never have to worry. She was amazing."

Forney ensured that Angelo received the proper food and drinks and she even learned some sign language to help communicate with him until his speech improved. After four years at Charter Oak, Angelo is now thriving in kindergarten. Although he still faces challenges, his mom said he is far ahead of where he might have been if he hadn't benefited from the high-quality care he received in his early years.

Angelo was able to receive the high-quality care with the help of a Quality First scholarship. The single mom and a full-time nursing student said she is grateful for the opportunity that Angelo had to attend a center where he learned to love books and become accustomed to routines, which helped his transition to school.

NORTHWEST MARICOPA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

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FUNDED PARTNERS - FY2015

Arizona Department of Education
Association for Supportive Child Care
Central Arizona College
Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc., dba Parenting Arizona
Child and Family Resources Inc.
Deer Valley Unified School District
Glendale Union High School District
Maricopa County Department of Public Health
Maricopa County School District 40 Glendale Elementary School District

Maricopa Integrated Health System
Pendergast Elementary School District
Peoria Unified School District
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University of Arizona Cooperative Extension
Valley of the Sun United Way

